



For Immediate Release  
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Bryan Wilkes  
(202) 586-7381  
Al Stotts  
(202) 586-7371

**Highly Enriched Uranium Recovered from Czech Technical University**  
***HEU Fuel Returned to Russia, Reactor Conversion Process Underway***

PRAGUE – The National Nuclear Security Administration (NNSA) announced today that 14 kilograms of highly enriched uranium (HEU) was safely and securely returned to the Russian Federation from the Czech Republic today under NNSA's Global Threat Reduction Initiative (GTRI) program.

The protected operation from the Czech Technical University in Prague was a joint effort between the United States, the Czech Republic, the Russian Federation, and the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA). The shipment was part of the prioritized, accelerated schedule implementing a key element of the Bush-Putin Bratislava Joint Statement on Nuclear Security Cooperation.

"The return of this highly enriched uranium is an important milestone in the administration's Global Threat Reduction Initiative campaign to reduce stockpiles of this high-risk, vulnerable material worldwide," said NNSA Administrator Linton F. Brooks. "It was only with the strong cooperation of the Czech Republic, Russia and IAEA that we were able to successfully complete this critical international nonproliferation project. In particular, I would like to congratulate the Czech Technical University for its assistance regarding this shipment."

The HEU, which could be used for nuclear weapons, was airlifted under guard from an airport near Prague, Czech Republic, to a secure facility in Dimitrovgrad, Russia, where the material will be down-blended to low enriched uranium (LEU). The United States has provided security upgrades at the facility in Russia under NNSA's U.S.-Russian Material, Protection, Control and Accounting Program.

Yesterday, during the first day of the two-day operation, approximately 14 kilograms of HEU was loaded into three specialized Russian transportation containers. IAEA safeguards inspectors and U.S. technical experts were present at the university to monitor the process of loading the fuel into the canisters. Today, a Russian airplane transported the HEU fuel back to Russia.

The HEU, originally supplied to the Czech Republic by the Soviet Union, was used as fuel for the Department of Nuclear Reactors of the Czech Technical University in its VR-1 Sparrow research reactor.

The repatriation of the HEU fuel from the VR-1 research reactor was part of the joint effort between the NNSA, the Russian Federation and the IAEA to convert the VR-1 reactor to operate on LEU fuel and supply new LEU fuel to the university. The VR-1 research reactor is the first Soviet-/Russian-supplied research reactor to convert to LEU fuel. At the end of July, the HEU fuel was discharged from the reactor in preparation for return to Russia. U.S. and Czech technical specialists conducted all necessary calculations to assure safe and efficient operation of the VR-1 research reactor using LEU fuel.

This is the eighth successful shipment of uranium returned to Russia under NNSA's GTRI program. To date, approximately 122 kilograms of fresh HEU have been repatriated to Russia from Serbia, Romania, Bulgaria, Libya, Uzbekistan, the Czech Republic, and Latvia. This is the second shipment of fresh HEU fuel from the Czech Republic this fiscal year and highlights the aggressive efforts of the GTRI program. With the successful completion of this mission, all Russian-origin fresh HEU fuel designated for repatriation has been removed from the Czech Republic.

The mission of the GTRI is to identify, secure, recover and/or facilitate the final disposition of high-risk vulnerable nuclear and radiological materials around the world as quickly as possible.

NNSA enhances U.S. national security through the military application of nuclear energy, maintains the U.S. nuclear weapons stockpile, promotes international nuclear nonproliferation and safety, reduces global danger from weapons of mass destruction, provides the U.S. Navy with safe and effective nuclear propulsion, and oversees its national laboratories to maintain U.S. leadership in science technology.

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